

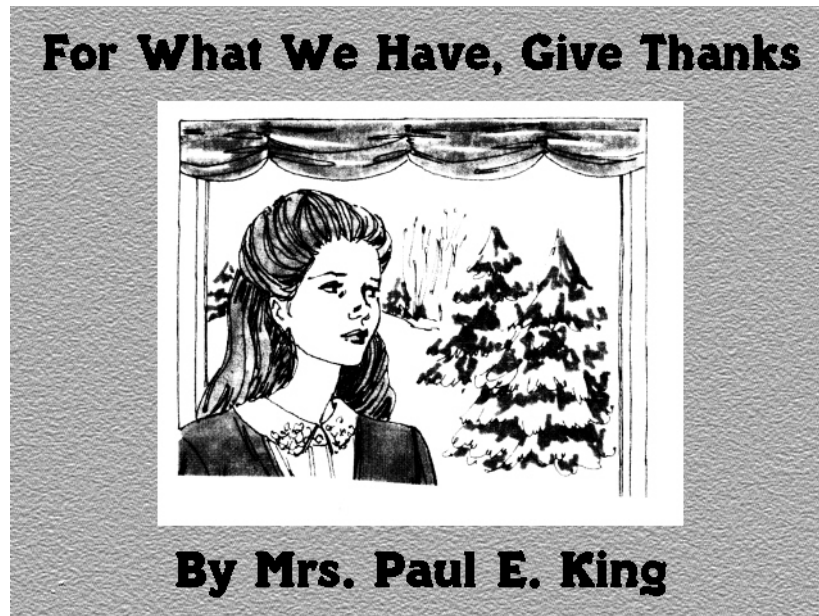
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**FOR WHAT WE HAVE, GIVE THANKS**  
**By Mrs. Paul E. King**

"Forevermore, Sis, stop pacing the floor like a caged lion," Luke said to Lori. "And put a smile on your face for a change, please. I almost feel like we're strangers since you've come home."

"Please, Luke!" Lori pleaded, raising her hand in a forlorn kind of gesture. "You can't know how badly I feel. You'll never know. Never! I loved Keith."

"But you'll get over it, Lori," Luke exclaimed positively. "You're not the first girl with a broken heart and you'll not be the last. Not that this will help you any. But it is a fact."

"That isn't funny. If it was meant to be funny, that is. And how can you be so . . . so unfeeling and . . . and uncaring? First it's Grandma who won't be at the table this Thanksgiving and now . . . now . . . Keith." And Lori broke into sobs.

"Stop it, Lori," Luke said quickly. "Keith isn't worth your tears. Any fellow who would jilt a girl the way he has done you isn't worth the tears shed for him. Especially not when it's my sister who was jilted. Now dry your tears, please," he said, handing a box of tissues to her.

Lori dropped into the nearest chair and, raising her head, she said, "Oh, Luke, I know you mean well. But it hurts so! We were to have been married on Christmas Eve!"

"I know. I know. I was to have been Keith's best man, remember? But say, am I ever thankful you aren't going to marry the jilter! Lori, God did you a favor. Do you realize this? Have you ever stopped to thank Him; to offer Him praise and thanksgiving for getting you out of what would have been catastrophic for you and your entire life? He got you out of a real mess, Sis."

"But I love him," she cried.

"And he could care less about your love, now that he's found the love of his life -- his words -- in Jenna Brenaby."

Dabbing at her eyes, Lori asked tearfully, "How could he do it, Luke? How?"

"You're asking the wrong person, Sis: I'm not a brute of a man. You and I were taught to not trifle where affections are concerned. I guess not everyone has had our kind of training and upbringing, nor our code and

standard of moral ethics and beautiful old-fashioned values. It's obvious that Keith certainly didn't, and hasn't."

"But a Bible school student, Luke! You'd expect the best out of someone preparing for the ministry. . . . Lori was devastated.

"Not all who say Lord, Lord, . . ." Luke quoted from Matthew 7:21. "There are ever so many counterfeits in the world, Sis. Even in the religious world, I'm sorry to say. You know this as well as I. It's sad but true. He was a counterfeit."

"I don't believe he was at first," Lori remarked, staring at the snow-covered trees outside. "I really believe Keith was . . . well, genuine when he first came to Bible school."

"Do you feel he was sanctified wholly? Did he ever testify to having been cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit?" Luke asked. "Truthfully, Lori, he always struck me as being shallow and . . . and . . . well, I may as well say it -- I felt he was a phony."

"Go on, Luke. Please."

"Well, I . . . I always had the impression when I was around Keith that he was a super-super actor. Like he just wasn't real. Hey, I guess I should not have said that, huh?"

"From all that's happened this past month or so, I must admit that you were right. On all scores, Luke. And it hurts me deeply to verbalize this heart-rending fact and the all too obvious reality of it. Oh, Luke, you can't begin to know how I hurt: you've never been in love as yet."

"Pretty close to it, Lori; if not completely so! I suppose the difference is that Margaret and I both decided we wanted to pray more earnestly about our dating so seriously before we came to any real conclusion about the matter. In my heart, I know there has never been another girl like Margaret. And I feel there never will be another. But rather than get too serious, I'm waiting upon the Lord. After all, neither Margaret nor I are exactly old!" Luke teased. "And since you're my twin, that means that my sister isn't old either. Now smile, please; will you? Mom and Dad and I really miss the sunshine a smile puts on your face. And Lori, God isn't dead."

"Meaning. . .?"

"He sees how your heart's been crushed and smashed, and He knows the hurt and the pain you're feeling. And do you know what I think He'd be pleased for you to do?"

"You told me a while ago -- thank Him. But Luke, I want my thanksgiving to be genuine, not mere lip service."

"And it won't be mere lip service once you begin to thank and praise Him for rescuing you from a man to whom the marriage vows wouldn't have amounted to more than the snap of your finger. If he's this fickle now, just think what you'd have had when you were married to him."

Lori gasped. "Oh," she cried, "I never thought of that. I . . . I . . . maybe you're right, Luke."

"He is right," Mrs. Turbett declared as she came into the room and sat on the arm of Lori's chair. "This is God's way of saving my lovely daughter from a life of heartache and heartbreak. You will never know this side of Heaven, the many prayers your father and I prayed for you, Lori. Neither of us felt he was God's choice for you. We mentioned this to you at first, as you will recall. But you seemed blinded by his devotion and ardor. We knew then that our greatest and most powerful 'weapon' was prayer and fasting. And we used it. Mightily so."

"Oh, Mother, I wasn't rebelling against you and Daddy."

"We know you weren't, Lori. But neither were you seeing things the way others saw them. Your love for Keith blinded your eyes. And now that it's over, I want you to do as Luke advised you to do -- begin praising and thanking the Lord for rescuing you from what would never have been a happy marriage. Nor, even, a lifetime marriage. Mrs. Kitchener called me long distance when she heard what Keith had done to you. . . ."

"Mrs. Kitchener?" Lori questioned.

"Keith's folks' neighbor. She had a granddaughter who graduated from our Bible school two years ago. She remembered having met you at a youth

meeting when she came back to visit Cammie, her granddaughter. She said Keith had been engaged out there twice before. He broke the hearts of two other girls. She is praising the Lord that you won't be marrying him."

Lori sat stunned. Then, like a window was opening to let in fresh air, or like a heavy curtain was being pulled apart to reveal the roseate light of a perfect day, she got to her feet, saying, "The Lord be praised! Like you said, He has 'rescued' me; saved me from making the mistake of my life. Oh, Mother -- Luke -- I see it now. It's going to take time, but I know I'll heal."

"Indeed you will," Mrs. Turbett affirmed. "And Lori, God never takes anything away from us just to be taking it. Never. Everything our Heavenly Father does has meaning and purpose to it. He takes away that He may give us the best -- His best. And as to Grandma not being here for this Thanksgiving, begin to praise the Lord for what you have. I mean, well, it is only because of the miracle God performed on Grandma that she is still living. The doctors all thought she'd never live through the surgery. But she did, and she is. And she's now home and recuperating wondrously well. This is reason enough to praise God and to be thankful for, don't you think so?"

"Oh, Mother, I do. I do. I'm ashamed of myself for seeing only the dark side of things; the familiar things I wouldn't have this Thanksgiving, like Grandma and... and..., well, I won't even mention his name."

"Until we can begin to look at the bright side of life, Lori, and thank the Lord for the many, many blessings we do have, we'll sink down into the quagmire of depression and despondency and drop into the slough of gloom and doubt. And before you are aware of it almost, your joy will have taken wings and your testimony for Jesus will have departed.

"The Lord wants us to praise Him in and during and under all circumstances, my dear. And, too, He wants us to be thankful. I Thessalonians 5:18 tells us, 'In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.' Our spirit soars, and darkness and gloom depart, when we begin to give thanks and praise to God."

Lori threw her arms around her mother. "Thanks, Mom," she said. "You've always been my best earthly friend and closest confidant, and not once have you ever been wrong in what you advised or told me to do. And thanks to you, too, Luke," she added, turning and smiling for him. "The scales

of love did have me blinded; but the sun's breaking through now and I'm beginning to see clearly. From this moment on, with God's help, I will praise the Lord and give thanks -- from the depth of my heart -- for the blessings He has so bountifully bestowed upon me. That verse in I Thessalonians will be mine. Now what may I do to help you with Thanksgiving Day dinner preparations, Mother? You know how much I love to do baking. . . .

"It's the pies for you then, Lori: pumpkin, peach, mincemeat and coconut cream. And, God willing, we'll see to it that Grandma gets a taste of each. She's not allowed too many rich foods as yet, but Grandpa can see to it that she doesn't over-indulge. He's quite a persuasive 'home doctor' with Grandma. Now let's get busy. Grab an apron." And mother and daughter hurried into the kitchen.

Luke lifted his eyes heavenward. "Thank You, Father," he said, as tears of joy slid over his lashes.